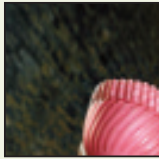


the chronicle

NEW YORK TALK ON THE NET BY GLASS EXPERT

– see page 3



GREAT SHOW, BUT FEW TURN OUT FOR SUPERGROUP

– see page 4



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Shoppers queue for opening of Tesco

HUNDREDS of shoppers passed through the doors of Dudley's new £27million Tesco superstore as it opened for the first time with an official ceremony.

Eager customers gathered outside the four main entrances to the new Tesco Extra supermarket near Burnt Tree Island on Monday to wait for the shutters to rise at 8am.

The store also includes a Dominos Pizza outlet, beauty salon and a dedicated technology zone selling TVs and iPads.

It was officially opened in a ceremony at 10am led by Dudley's Mayor Councillor Michael Evans and long-term Tesco employee Anne Shinton.

But early-morning shoppers were given their first glimpse of the new store two hours earlier when trading first started.

The first customers through the doors were retired firefighter Dave Birch and his wife Ruth, who had queued outside the store since 5am.

Work on the new store has taken more than six months to complete after the original store, created in 1992, closed in January.

Demolition of the old supermarket ended in March.

Store manager Steve Goswell said: "My team and I would like to thank everyone involved in the opening of the new store and all the customers who came along."

Free check for cancer

KINGSWINFORM Lions Club is inviting men in Dudley and Stourbridge to attend a free prostate cancer check next Wednesday (October 26).

The free and painless blood test is being administered by health professionals.

They will send results by mail to everyone who takes part.

Stourbridge Institute, on Bell Street, is the venue for the health event which takes place from 7-9.30pm.

Free car parking is available.

Horror of great-gran as dog savages her pet cat

A GREAT-GRANDMOTHER watched in horror as a dog savaged her cat, which had to be put down.

Widow Grace Jones, aged 80, is distraught after the attack, which happened in her garden at Blundies Lane, Enville, Stourbridge.

The black and tan animal – described as a pit bull or Staffordshire-type – mauled 15-year-old Tibby even as a 75-year-old neighbour used a metal bar to beat off the dog.

It had chased the cat from the front to the back garden and pinned it on her

back on Sunday, October 9 at about 8.30am. Tibby, Mrs Jones's pet from a kitten, was later put down by a vet.

Mrs Jones was talking to her neighbour, Norman Round, when the dog attacked.

"Norman hit the dog with an iron bar, which was inside my back door, but the attack went on for about five minutes," she said.

"The dog went off but came back and had her again before just running off down the road."

Police are investigating.

Canal fears as boat licence fee goes up for second year

THE COST of boat licences will rise for the second consecutive year, sparking fears for the future of the region's canals.

British Waterways will increase the price of licences by 6.4 per cent from April next year. The board approved a rise of two per cent above the consumer price index for the next three years in November last year.

But canal society bosses across the Black Country claim it will discourage people from using the region's canals and rivers.

That could then have a knock-on effect on related industries, including canalside pubs and boat hiring businesses.

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society boss Christopher Dyche said the latest increase would add almost £50 to the average licence fee of £832 for a 60ft boat.

The 68-year old, from Stourbridge, added: "Boating is becoming an extremely expensive hobby and the latest increase has come at a time when everything else is going up."

"The cost of fuel has obviously increased and there are mooring fees to find."

"The feedback we are getting is that the cost is getting too much."

"We need boat traffic to sustain canals and the flora and fauna within them."

Scheme for £3m school is rejected

PLANS for a £3million free school in Stourbridge have been rejected by government officials with applicants told to go back to the drawing board.

Places for more than 450 pupils and at least 30 teaching jobs would have been created by the scheme.

But the Future Education Trust, which was behind the project, says plans have now been delayed following the Government's decision.

Trust director Mustafa Erol said its plans to rent and convert commercial premises in Lye costing more than £3m had scuppered the proposal.

He added the Government wants the trust to look at cheaper options so more could be spent on the education of pupils. "I am very disappointed but we will go back to the drawing board and submit an application for next year," he said.

Issues

"The Government identified two issues with our application. We have to look at the value for money of our plan."

Free Schools are independent from local authority control but are state-funded and can set parts of their own curriculum.

The school would have been based in warehousing and office space in Hayes business park, costing around £3m to convert and around £300,000 to rent.

The trust also looked at using the former Corus office in Stourbridge Road, Lye. Dudley Labour group spokesman for education, Councillor Tim Crumpton, said: "I'm disappointed for the people who have put effort into the proposal."

Four arrested at derby game

FOUR arrests were made by police following the West Bromwich Albion and Wolves derby clash.

Nearly 25,000 fans attended the game at The Hawthorns on Sunday, won 2-0 by the home side.

British Transport Police issued five fixed penalty notices on the Metro for public order offences.

VILLAGERS GET SAY ON PLANS

HUNDREDS of residents turned out to have a say over controversial plans to build more than 200 homes, commercial units and office space on land in Hagley.

The development has sparked fears that it will overstretch village services like schools as well as concerns that roads could not cope with extra traffic.

The site is part of the 350-acre estate owned by Lord Cobham who wants to sell off the land to help safeguard the future of the historic Hagley Hall.

The land is bordered by the A456 Kidderminster Road and the A491 Stourbridge Road in Hagley and under the plans would be transformed by developers Cala Homes into up to 230 new homes. Other plans for the site include commercial and office space which could create up to 50 new jobs as well as a new medical centre.

The development would be accessed off the Kidderminster Road, Stourbridge Road and Park Road roundabout which would be installed with new lights.

Hagley Parish Council chairman Steve Colella was among those who went along to a public exhibition at Hagley Community Centre on Saturday.

He said: "I am not surprised at the turnout, we have been having regular contact with residents from Hagley and Clet."

Mr Colella said people were concerned that the schools would not be able to take more pupils and about the capacity of the roads.

Resident Bob Glaze, of Newfield Road, who attended the public exhibition, claimed the plans were "ridiculous and unworkable".

"It is just unbelievable that anyone could think of putting a large development like that in that particular place," he added.

MONITORED

Hagley resident Steve Collins took his 18-month-old son Alex while he viewed the proposals. He said: "There is no mention here about schools. My second concern is the road congestion."

CALA Homes regional development director Jonathan Thompson said traffic had been monitored to identify where improvements to junctions would be needed. He said the firm was discussing options to cope with any increase in schoolchildren with the council.

"Affordable housing will make up 40 per cent of the new homes and will allow young local people, who would otherwise be unable to afford it, to enter the housing market," he said.



Steve Colella, parish council chairman, at the exhibition

Teachers strike on academy bid

TEACHERS at The Kingswinford School picketed in protest over plans for it to become an academy.

The school was open only to Year 11 pupils on Tuesday as around 40 members of staff and union chiefs gathered outside the two main gates. Banners and flags were set up outside both entrances in Water Street.

Governors have already voted in favour of the school becoming an academy, but staff claim there has been no consultation.

They also feel academies are not accountable to the local community. Teachers are worried their pay and conditions could be affected.

But governors said parents and staff had been consulted within the statutory timeframe.

Anne Brimacombe, from the National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers, said: "Once the school becomes an academy it will in essence be a private company."

"Where will the accountability be?"

Chair of governors Janice Daines said: "The governing body and senior leadership of The Kingswinford School are convinced that conversion to academy status is in the best interests of the students, staff and community."



Staff on strike at The Kingswinford School

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The winners show off their awards at the Black Country Sport and Physical Activity Awards ceremony at Dudley

Sporting award adds the varnish to Jess's success

HALESOWEN cyclist Jess Varnish has been crowned Black Country Sports person of The Year as she targets a place at next year's Olympics.

The 20-year-old picked up the Elvis Gordon award at the Black Country Sport and Physical Activity Awards ceremony in Dudley.

Varnish, who rides for Halesowen Athletics and Cycling Club, hopes to clinch a place on the British track cycling team for London 2012 and she pipped fellow Olympic hopeful Kristian Thomas, a Wolverhampton-based gymnast, to the top prize.

The awards, which are in their third year,

were hosted by Wolverhampton-born Olympian and cycling commentator Hugh Porter at Dudley's Copthorne Hotel recently.

Simon Hall, Black Country BeActive Partnership director said: "It was a real Olympic-style night of great highs, some very emotional, and once again showed how important the awards and sport are to local people."

More than 200 sportsmen and women, officials and guests gathered at the event as winners were announced in 16 categories.

Veteran boxing coach Bob Dillon collected the Chair's Recognition Award for his long service to Lions Boxing Club in Brierley Hill while former Worcestershire crick-

eter Gavin Haynes was named coach of the year.

Award winners
Volunteer of the year: Amy Baker (Willenhall), swimming; runners-up, Jayne Withers (Rowley Regis), swimming, Luke Collins (Dudley), football.

Physical activity initiative of the year: Dudley Healthy Towns Multi-sport; runners-up, Sporting FADS, Badminton/Zumba (Tipton), Galton Valley Morn and Toddler Family Fitness (Sandwell).

Sport Unlimited project of the year: Swimming lessons for children with Down's Syndrome (Walsall); runners-up, Rakegate Dance (Wolverhampton), Q3 Key Stage 2 Athletics (Great Barr).

Community club of the year: Wyrley Juniors Football Club (Walsall); runners-up, Halesowen Athletic and Cycle Club, Team Sandwell Volleyball Club.

Community team of the year: RGK TCAT Rhinos Wheelchair Basketball (Wolverhampton); runners-up, Dudley Heathens Speedway, OK Rugby Club.

Junior team of the year: Sandwell Girls Athletics; runners-up Dudley College football.

Young sportsperson of the year: Maddison Moore (Dudley) karate; runners-up, Reuben Charlesworth (Dudley) kickboxing, Jordan Fellows (Walsall) slalom skiing.

Disabled sportsperson of the year: Jordanne Whitley (Halesowen) wheelchair tennis; runners-up, Kyle Marsh (Wolverhampton) wheelchair basketball, Jayne Hinnett (Dudley) tennis.

Young volunteer of the year: Sam Johnson (Wolverhampton) rugby; runners-up, Chloe Harris (Walsall) football, Harriet Platter (Walsall) football.

Coach of the year: Gavin Haynes (Dudley) cricket; runners-up, Howard Court (Tipton) athletics, Mohammed Abdullah (Snettisham) boxing.

Unsung hero: Diane Davis (Stourton) tennis; runners-up, Richard Turner (Kingswinford) hockey, Geoff Webb (Willenhall) hockey.

Elvis Gordon sportsperson of the year: Jess Varnish (Halesowen) cycling; runner-up, Kristian Thomas (Wolverhampton) gymnastics.

Chair's recognition award: Bob Dillon (Brierley Hill) boxing.

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Hospital hit by car park problem

CAR parking charges at Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley were collected by staff for part of last week after a fault developed in pay machines.

Paula Clark, chief executive of The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The barriers in the patient and visitor car parks were lifted to prevent excessive queuing."

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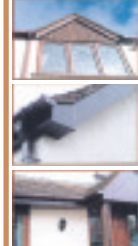
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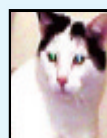
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Head's £8m bid for revamp at school

MULTI-MILLION pound plans have been unveiled to rebuild parts of a newly-created academy in Dudley and set up a new sixth form.

Holly Hall Academy has applied for £8million of funding from the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme, with principal Graham Lloyd saying parts of the school building are in a poor state of repair.

Mr Lloyd, who led the former maths and computing college in a successful bid to become an academy in the summer, is also hoping to introduce a sixth form.

Register services to switch

BIRTHS, marriages and deaths will be registered at Stourbridge Library when the town's register office closes later this month.

The register office in the Crown Centre is shutting as part of the £50million regeneration of the shopping complex which will see a new Tesco created.

The move had sparked fears that people would have to travel into Dudley for registration services. But council bosses have said that the new service will open at the town's library on October 24.

People will also be able to register notices of marriage and civil partnerships although actual ceremonies have been shelved for good.

Weddings and civil partnerships will now longer take place in the town due to "low demand".

The Crown Centre register office was closing today (October 20).

Expert is on stream



Charles Hajdamach studies a vase

GLASS enthusiasts across the world will tune into the internet to watch a live lecture from New York – delivered by renowned Midland expert Charles Hajdamach.

Mr Hajdamach, who is now aged 64, was Dudley Council's principal curator of museums for almost 30 years until 2004.

He will be talking about inventions to create works of art, devised in the heart of Stourbridge's famous glassmaking industry between 1880 and 1920. The event is tonight (October 20) at 7.30pm.

Condition

The Priority Schools Building Programme is a scheme from the Department for Education to rebuild 200 schools across the country in the worst condition.

"We're definitely not among the worst in the country, but there are parts – such as the sports facility – which are very poor indeed," Mr Lloyd added.

"The programme is also willing to look at other priorities as well so we are hoping that our aims for a sixth form provision will help."

"We should know either way by Christmas."

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Supergroup plays to handful of fans

A Stourbridge music venue has confessed that a "supergroup" charity gig with an international line-up drew a paying audience of no more than 25 people.

Around 50 fans and guests enjoyed a concert by the Major Toms, featuring UB40 saxophone player Brian Travis, Richard March of Pop Will Eat Itself and drummer Keith York, of Lightning Seeds fame.

Lead singer, Owen Comaskey, of the Birmingham-born Nervous Kind band, jetted over from New York for the Road Recovery Foundation, to play with the Major Toms.

But the Base Studios in Stourbridge, which hosted the event on October 7, has admitted that just 20 to 25 people paid the £7 a head entry fee.

Donation

The Base Studios - which has a capacity of up to 200 - will, however, make a donation of at least £100 to Nordoff Robbins, a charity dedicated to providing music therapy for people with a range of mental health and behavioural problems.

Dentist Glen Durant, aged 61, of Newfield Road, Hagley, who was at the gig, said: "It was an absolutely wonderful performance by world-class musicians."

"It's such a shame that more people weren't there," added Mr Durant. "They missed a real treat because, not only were such good rockers appearing on stage, they also mingled with the audience before and after the show and chatted with them."

The star line-up performed numbers by David Bowie, including Suffragette City and Heroes, and Roxy Music tracks such as Virginia Plain and Love is the Drug.

Sarah Evans, of The Base Studios, said of the show: "It was brilliant."



The Major Toms, from left, Brian Travis, guitarists Tim Felton and Andy Peel, Richard March, Keith York, Owen Comaskey, backing singer Maggie Smyth, of El Cage and Hollywood Beyond, and Dave Robertson, keyboard player

Co-owner fined £8,000 over faulty electrics at takeaway

THE STOURBRIDGE boss of a takeaway in Wolverhampton has been fined more than £8,000 after a series of electricity problems were deemed so serious that they posed a fire risk.

Safety officers found an "excessive" amount of extension cables and multi-point adaptors being used to power equipment at Oregon, at Merry Hill. Exposed copper wiring and cracked and damaged power sockets were also found at the Coalway Road business.

A further catalogue of problems was also uncovered during checks last

October and November including a faulty ventilation system, poor temperature control of high risk food and a lack on documents or records. Four improvement notices were served on the business in October and November but problems were not remedied.

The co-owner of the business, Mhardad Khordad, from Stourbridge, was fined £8,115 at Wolverhampton Magistrates Court on October 12 after admitting four charges of contravening the requirements of an improvement notice.

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Phones and internet cut off by metal thieves

THOUSANDS of homes and businesses across the Midlands are being left without phones and internet as metal thieves target the region's telephone network.

BT said thieves have struck more than 40 times in the region in the past six months, ripping out underground cables, severing overhead wires and attacking cable boxes for copper.

Faults are up 30 per cent this year, mainly as a result of cable theft. Stourbridge is a regular target. Now BT has launched its own national task force to work with police.

Shelter leads to bill for £1,000

A WINE BAR owner must pay more than £1,000 for failing to remove a drinking and smoking area behind his Black Country premises.

Jimmy Lee admitted breaching an enforcement notice by Dudley Council to remove the rear extension at the Alter Ego bar, in Kingswinford High Street.

Dudley Magistrates' Court heard last Thursday that the area had been built without planning permission. An enforcement notice was issued on February 24 but the extension had still not been taken down, the court heard.

Ceased

Lee, aged 28, of Dudley Road, Kingswinford, was fined £500 and told to pay £490 costs and a £15 victim surcharge.

The court was told the wine bar had ceased trading as Lee, who owns the land, plans to turn the premises into a place to eat.

Tim Holder, prosecuting for Dudley Council, said the extension was a raised platform surrounded by fencing.

"Despite talks with the owner this platform and associated works has still not been removed," he said.

Lee, who was not represented, told the court the work would be carried out when renovation started.

Michelle draws inspiration



Youngsters and parents with the artwork created by the toddlers using eco-friendly materials at Happy Acorns Nursery

AN eco-friendly mother of two from Norton has sketched out a new career and set up an arty business to inspire youngsters to get creative.

Michelle Aymes launched Happy Acorns three weeks ago to provide a range of natural art activities, focusing on the environment, for pre-school children.

Using reusable and recycled materials the children are encouraged to learn more about local wildlife,

produce and sustainable living. Michelle, aged 28, a former business consultant at HSBC, said: "I was due to return to work in December after having my second child but my husband really inspired me to set up the business and follow my dream."

"Happy Acorns is an opportunity for youngsters to improve their developmental capacity for creativity and problem solving in a safe, fun and exciting way."

"I am really keen to get more children involved in

outdoor crafts as well as making them aware that materials can be reused to create some wonderful things."

Classes are held each Monday from 10.15-11.15am at St James Church Hall, Wollaston, and every Friday from 1.45-2.45pm at St Michaels and All Angels Church Hall, Norton.

Each costs £4.50 per child or £4 if paid for in a six-week block.

Details: e-mail Michelle at happyacorns.nature@gmail.com or call 07848 122578.

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Schools may get 20mph limits

NEW 20mph speed limits could be introduced outside schools in Dudley under new plans discussed by council leaders.

Limits would be slashed at peak times for traffic each morning and afternoon.

The scheme is already having a trial run outside three schools - Olive Hill and Newfield Park primaries in Halesowen and at Kingswinford's Crestwood School.

Safety

Councillor Adrian Turner tabled the motion asking the council to implement 20mph speed limit zones outside all schools in the borough.

He claimed the move would demonstrate "our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of the children" in the area.

Cabinet member for transport Councillor Patrick Harley backed the proposal and called for a report to be drawn up.

But he added: "Clearly this would not be appropriate to introduce outside all schools."

Centre's new fitness class

A NEW fitness class is being launched at Stourbridge's Crystal Leisure Centre later this month.

Visitors to the complex in Bell Street can join step aerobics sessions.

They will run for an hour on Mondays from 10.45 to 11.45am and will begin on October 31. For more information call 01384 812800.

Tile firm hits back over quarry protest claims

THE HISTORIC tile company at the centre of a planning row over its quarry in Kingswinford has hit back at a string of accusations from protesters.

Hinton, Perry & Davenhill has been making bricks and tiles for two centuries.

The Black Country firm says claims of lorries using the quarry as early as 6am are untrue. And bosses insist that Environmental Health officers have given the quarry a clean bill of health over claims of dust pollution.

Bosses have also slammed suggestions that the firm's Ketley Quarry will be used as a toxic waste dump.

Managing director Alex Patrick-Smith said: "No-one would ever consider putting a toxic dump in an area like this. We wouldn't want it, and the council would never permit it."

His company brought in WCL Quarries earlier this year to handle the eventual filling-in of the quarry over the next two decades, using building rubble.

Clay

Hinton, Perry & Davenhill has been extracting Etruria marl clay for more than 80 years from the Kingswinford site. It is the crucial ingredient in its Dreadnought roof tiles and the celebrated Staffordshire blue bricks.

But nearby residents are protesting, saying that since WCL took over there has been excessive noise and dust and that lorries arrive at 6am - hours before the time laid down under the quarry's permit.

At a protest by 150 residents Malcolm Roden, aged 65, who has lived next to the quarry for more than 20 years, said: "There are significant health issues with so much dust in the air."

But WCL boss Simon Winner says CCTV footage shows no lorries turning up before 7.30am, while Mr Patrick-Smith says council tests on the dust found on local cars showed it was different to that produced at the quarry. Residents and councillors have been taken on tours of the quarry to see how water is sprayed to keep dust down.



Ketley Quarry, where fears of a toxic dump have been dismissed by bosses



Tile-maker Steve Parsonage



MD Alex Patrick-Smith



A protest by residents. There have been claims of lorries using the site from 6am

Work on site is essential, declare bosses

THE protests by residents over the plans for the quarry have come after a series of planning applications for the site were lodged with Dudley Council, including an application for work to begin at 7am.

WCL says ahead of the eventual restoration of the site it has applied to the council for permission to install a weighbridge and widen the access road to 25ft, allowing larger lorries through.

WCL argues that it has created 11 jobs since it started work this year.

Security

And Alex Patrick-Smith, managing director of the site owners Hinton, Perry & Davenhill, said that without the restoration and recycling work the future security of one of the oldest businesses in the borough will be in doubt.

That would jeopardise the future of the firm's 67 employees, said Mr Patrick-Smith.

He said: "We are required by February next year to have a restoration plan in place for the quarry, detailing how it will be filled and landscaped."

"The alternative to the work we are planning would be a huge hole left in the landscape, and that is clearly not an option."

Under recycling rules, the building rubble that will gradually fill in the 55-acre quarry over the next 15 to 20 years must be no bigger than 75mm chunks.

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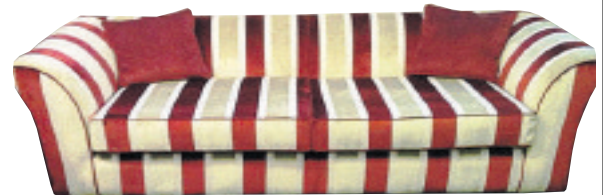
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Eight-year-old twins Alice and Charlotte Locker take a look at canal art with Thomas Locker, aged six

Event hosts up to 70 craft Canal boats gather for big festival



Birmingham Canal Navigation Society member Nick Wolfe on his boat, the Aldgate

DOZENS of boats were moored along the historic Stourbridge Canal for an annual festival.

There was a host of free attractions for people to enjoy at Stourbridge Navigation Trust's open weekend.

Up to 70 boats lined the Stourbridge town arm canal at the Bonded Warehouse, off Canal Street, as part of the event.

Around 50 vintage vehicles were

also on display during the festivities.

Other attractions for families to enjoy included the chance to look at a couple of steam engines, a bouncy castle, face painting and a craft fair. Trip boats were also on hand for people to examine.

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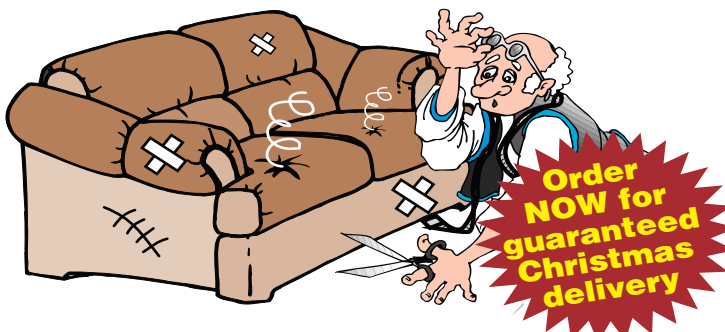
Chris Dyche, from the Stourbridge Navigation Trust said: "It is an open weekend that is free to the public and held to promote the local waterways

and to give something back to the local area. We have had a very good turn, which has probably been helped by the nice weather, and everything seems to have gone very well."

Among those who went along was Nick Wolfe, a member of Birmingham Canal Navigation Society who took along his own boat.

He said: "I have really enjoyed the event, it is nice to relax in the sun. There are some really interesting things down here."

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COMPETITION

Show a real gift for festive ideas

YES it's the countdown to Christmas - the shops are already filling up with cards and gift ideas. So time to book your place for the Festive Gift Fair which returns to Birmingham's NEC for the 16th year. And we have teamed up with the organisers to offer 18 readers the chance to win a pair of tickets for the show.

The four-day show, which will run between November 17-20, offers visitors a massive array of inspirational and affordable Christmas gift ideas.

Gadgets

This year there will be gifts for even the most difficult-to-buy for relatives; with stalls as varied as chocolate pizzas from Nottingham, liqueurs and spirits from Anglesey, handbags and accessories from nearby Warwickshire and dog toys from Malvern.

There's kiddies' cookware from Kingsbridge and gents' gadgets from Telford, decorations from Stroud and cheese from Cornwall. With so much to choose from there's even a 'present crèche' for you to drop off your bags.

TV chef Ainsley Harriott will be his



Brighten up your home with the many festive decorations on offer

usual mischievous self and will be at the show to sign autographs on Thursday (17) from noon-3pm

Ticket prices start at just £8.50 for adults and are available from www.theticketfactory.com or 0844 581 0808. For more information visit www.festivegiftfair.co.uk or www.thenec.co.uk.



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Ainsley will be there on Thursday to sign autographs

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Putting on the anniversary style



Members of the Netherton Methodist Wives Club in their finery for a visit to Ascot in 2005



Members sit for a picture at the club's 25th anniversary at Trinity Methodist Church

Wives group's lunch marks 45 years of fun and funds



Wendy White, Maureen Hingley and Mary Martin with other club members

TRADITIONAL tea and cake and a fancy lunch out – members of Netherton Methodist Wives Club celebrated in style as they marked the group's 45-year milestone.

Since founder Mary Shaw set up the club almost half a century ago the group has raised around £1,000 every year for a variety of good causes, focusing their efforts in recent years on Troop Aid for injured soldiers.

And now the group, which is still going strong with 27 members, is searching for new blood to help it continue its traditions long into the future.

President Mary Martin said she was proud of all the achievements over the years. "I think it's wonderful that we have been together all these years," said Mrs Martin, aged 69, of New Village, Dudley Wood.

"The problem is, there's no young ones coming in now. "The lifestyle is so different now and people have other things to do with their time."

The group headed to the Thornescroft Hotel, near Bridgnorth, for an anniversary meal before heading back to base at Trinity Methodist Church in Church Road, Netherton, for a celebration tea and cake evening.

Member Mollie Smith, aged 74, said the group was launched as a way to give women the chance to get out in the evening. "We would have a chat, share our problems, and do nice things together," said the grandmother-of-seven, of Arch Hill Street, Netherton.

Fashion

"I have really enjoyed being part of this group."

"We have been on trips away, off to fashion shows, Ascot, as well as raising money."

"I just hope we can keep it going."

Club secretary Margaret Hingley, aged 68, of Mushroom Green, Netherton, added: "We have had some wonderful times over the years – it's a very friendly crowd that comes here."

"We hold quizzes and bingo nights, as well as holding our fundraising events."

Anyone who would like to join can call Mrs Hingley on 01384 565621.

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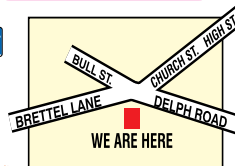
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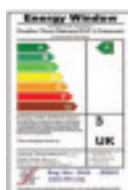
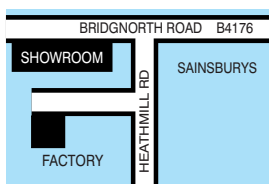
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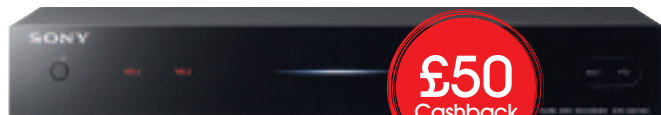
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Council is set to broadcast meetings live

COUNCIL meetings will be broadcast live to residents' homes in Dudley for the first time in a new online trial.

Under the plans, video streamed from the council chamber would be available on Dudley Council's website at the full council meeting on November 28.

Big rise in hospital donations

DONATIONS to hospital charities in Dudley have soared during the past 12 months, figures reveal.

Donations to the Dudley Group of Hospitals Charity increased from £409,000 to £480,000 last year.

The money is spent on medical equipment and training courses.

In the charity's annual report, fundraising co-ordinator for Dudley Group of Hospitals Karen Phillips – who was recruited following a drop in donations in 2008/09 – thanked people for their support.

She has produced a Just-Giving home page to encourage people to donate money online.

Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust received £609,000 in 2010-11, up from £420,000 the previous year. However there was a drop in donations at Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust.

The amount donated dropped from £263,095 in 2009/10 to £177,746.

New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton and Sandwell hospitals were unable to provide figures.

It is the first time residents will be able to see live images from the main chamber at Dudley Council House, in Priory Road.

Council leader, Councillor Les Jones, said the move would bring greater democracy and give more residents the chance to see councillors in action.

A £78,000 video and audio system was installed in the council chamber two years ago.

The system is connected to panels in front of each member's seat, allowing them to vote with results displayed on two big screens.

Both screens also beam footage of councillors to the public gallery high in the chamber as they address meetings.

But Councillor Jones says the system will also allow video footage to be streamed online through the council website www.dudley.gov.uk

Before now a standing order has been in place banning any video footage or audio to be broadcast outside the council chamber.

Car park open at Christmas

THE multi-storey Bell Street car park in Stourbridge will be kept open over Christmas before being demolished for a new store. The move is to help Christmas trade.

Charity taking wing



Fundraising teams prepare for the charity auction at Dudley's Village Hotel which aims to raise cash for Sedgley's Beacon Centre for the Blind

A CHANCE to fly a plane or enjoy a spa treatment will be among the prizes up for grabs at an auction organised to raise cash for a Black Country charity.

The event will be staged at the Village Hotel, in Castle Gate Retail Park, Dudley, tonight (October 20) to raise money for Sedgley's Beacon Centre for the Blind.

Prizes for the event, which is open to members of the public, have been collected by three businesses from the community.

The Village Hotel, 4Networking and Storage King have been working hard to secure a selection of prizes to go under the hammer.

And the company which raises the most cash during the event will be declared the winner while the other two will receive an Alan Sugar-style grilling by judges at the end of the auction.

The charity is hoping to raise a "substantial amount" of money through the auction and is calling for as much support as possible. Doors open at 6.30pm.

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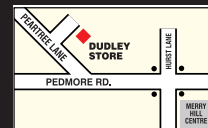
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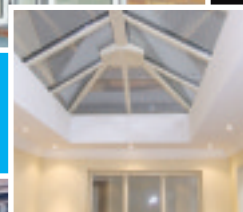
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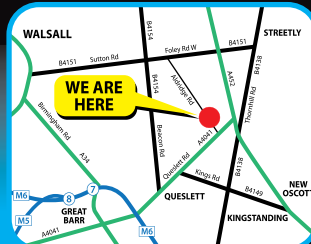
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Sparking an interest in energy

YOUNGSTERS got a closer look at an electric car powered by wind turbines and solar panels at Dudley Environment Zone.

Pupils from Roberts Primary School were invited to see the Nissan Leaf car which staff had borrowed for the day.

It was charged up using electricity generated by the wind turbines at the site in Robert Street, Lower Gornal.

Energy was also created by the centre's solar panels to help run the car.

Excitement

Environmental education officer Guy de Szathmari, who has worked at the site for 12 years, said: "We used the electric car to show pupils that it is possibly the car of the future and doesn't require petrol or diesel and just needs charging up."

"It generated a lot of interest and excitement from the pupils."

"We wanted to make them aware of renewable energies."

The centre provides education and information on a range of environmental topics to school children and groups across the borough.

When the centre first opened it catered for around 1,000 people each year but now welcomes 10,000 annually.

Front, Alex Cartwright, aged nine, and Leah Mills, 10, with Amelia Broadhouse, 10, electrical vehicle manager Chris Pollard, environmental education officer Guy de Szathmari, Ben Dumphy, 10, Lucy Lloyd, nine and Jack Birch, 10

Patients' meals go uneaten

THOUSANDS of uneaten meals are being sent back by patients at Dudley's Russell's Hall Hospital, costing the NHS more than £65,000 a year, it has emerged.

Five per cent of all meals served up at the hospital were sent back to kitchens by patients.

The hospital was one of the best performing NHS trusts in the region and spends just £4.78 on meals per patient per day.

Other hospitals saw as many as one in 10 meals going back.

Figures for more than 200 hospitals have revealed the scale of food waste in the NHS with more than nine million meals returned to kitchens at a cost of £22million a year. It has prompted fears over whether patients in hospitals are getting proper nutrition.

Many hospitals now claim to offer protected meal times, when patients are not disturbed and nurses are dedicated to helping elderly and vulnerable patients to eat.

Health minister Simon Burns said offering good quality food was "an essential part" of hospital care.

Council reveals job losses

A TOTAL of 460 staff have been shed by Dudley Council as part of cost-cutting measures to make savings of more than £22million in the present financial year.

Figures presented to a meeting of the authority's cabinet last week showed 56 employees had left through compulsory redundancy.

The remaining 404 staff to go requested voluntary redundancy.

This was supported by senior man-

agers and then agreed by council bosses. It has removed 314 full-time equivalent posts from the council with a further 129.2 positions achieved by not filling vacancies and another 41.49 by redeploying staff into other positions.

This places the total amount of full-time equivalent posts removed at 485. In January the council said it would need to axe around 460 such posts.

The highest number of compulsory redundancies was in the children's

services department with 42 staff axed. Members of the cabinet agreed the report at last week's meetings.

They also authorised officials to look at further redundancies for the coming financial year.

Councillor Tim Wright, deputy leader of the council, said: "Trade unions were consulted and were pleased with the council's efforts to reduce compulsory redundancies through the voluntary redundancy programme."

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Special award for a schoolboy hero

A TEENAGER who helped to save the life of one of his classmates when she was attacked outside the school gates has been presented with a special award.

Ben Hudson has won an Express & Star Local Hero award, organised by the Chronicle series' sister paper. He ignored the threat to his own safety and rugby-tackled Chloe West's attacker to the ground.

The 17-year-old suffered cuts to his hands from the eight-inch kitchen knife being wielded by Samuel Gayzer-Tomlinson, who was sentenced to 13 years in



Ben Hudson, of Wollaston, with his Express & Star Local Hero Award



prison last month after admitting attempted murder and unlawful wounding.

Ben, a pupil at Ridgewood High School in Wollaston, Stourbridge, was later praised by a judge who said his actions had helped to prevent the attack on 14-year-old Chloe, who was stabbed 20 times, from having a worse outcome.

Avid Wolves fan Ben, who was presented with the award at his home in Wollaston, said: "I'm flattered and honoured. It's nice to have been given an award."

Chloe, who was stabbed 20 times during the attack in April, suffered neck, face and upper body injuries.

She was airlifted to hospital and underwent surgery on her wounds.

A Facebook page was set up in honour of schoolboy Ben, called Ben Hudson - A True Hero, and messages praising him for his bravery were posted on the site.

The awards are supported by Birmingham Midshires and Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Ben and other winners will attend a celebrity lunch at Molineux in December.

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Have a scream this Halloween

HORRIBLE historians at **Black Country Living Museum** are set to disgust and delight with a Halloween Gore and Grime Trail which takes place during the half term holiday, until Sunday, October 30.

Ghostbusting visitors can follow a revolting route around the museum site or make wicked winged puppets during creative workshops held in the museum's Workers' Institute. A Victorian Side Show will take place on Fright Nights Friday and Saturday (October 28 and 29) when mysterious guides recount terrifying tales of old, whilst ghosts and

What's worse than a ghost - a ghost with a snake, roaming West Midland Safari Park
Little witches have a cackling good time at the Black Country Living Museum



ghouls lurk in the eerie half-light of the shadows on the gas-lit cobbled streets.

Circus skills, fire-juggling, face-painting, balloon animals, magician's tricks, living statues and the headless horseman will bring lots of fun and a macabre magic to the evening. A black comedy will be performed by theatre company, Fizzog.

Tickets for the museum's Fright Nights cost £13.60 per adult, £11 senior and £7.10 young person and must be pre-booked through the ticket office on 0121 520 8054 or via the museum's website at www.bclm.com.

A charge of £3.50 applies for faster sessions with mystics, psychics and palm readers and additional charges apply for fairground rides and car-parking.

There's a distinct chill in the air as **West Midland Safari Park** unleashes its creepiest creatures for a Spooky Spectacular.

Running daily from 10am and on selected evenings, everyone is encouraged to dress up and take part in a variety of scary activities and eerie animal encounters to celebrate Halloween.

Spooky Nights are open from tomorrow (Friday) at 5.30pm until October 30. As the daylight fades staff will be bracing themselves to deliver the ultimate spooky experience as the park has 100 haunting exhibits and more than 3,000 pumpkins. There are spooks galore from the Wild Woods witches and wailing women and wandering zombies to shivering scarecrows.

The Tree Tops Pavilion will be transformed into a Halloween haven for hands-on craft activities and is the place to hear spooky stories to send shivers down the spine. Hear chilling tales of giant snakes from the reptile crypt, while the sea lion show will take on a phantom pirate theme. During the whole event the

IT'S the season for ghosts, ghouls, witches, werewolves and anything else likely to go bump in the night... and attractions across the West Midlands are joining the creepy cavalcade

all-weather Discovery Trail exhibits will be open including the Twilight Cave, Creepy Crawlies, Seaquarium and Mark O'Shea's Reptile World, along with late night rides that will naturally include Venom and the Black Fly.

Standard admission prices apply for Spooky Days (£13.99 adults, £11.99 children) and special prices apply for entry during Spooky Nights (£6.99 adults, £4.99 children). Amusement rides are charged extra.

Further information is available from the park's official website www.wmsp.co.uk or by telephone on 01299 402114.

The ghost train will be leaving from Kidderminster's **Severn Valley Railway** station on Saturday and then over the Halloween weekend.

Tickets cost £5.95 each for both adults and children. Children under the age of four years travel free. Pre-booking is essential either on 01299 403816 or see www.svr.co.uk.

From ghosts and ghouls to gruesome tucker, **Cadbury World** is hosting a spook-tacular line-up of activities this Halloween.

The popular attraction is planning a series of frighteningly fun Halloween themed activities between October 22 and 30 including a spooky fancy dress competition for children.

The Cadbury World staff will be creating mischief and mayhem dressed as ghosts and ghouls, with visitors treated to family entertainment including children's performer Rags and ventriloquist Kimmo.

The restaurant will be offering a terrifyingly tasty menu including

sludge casserole, werewolf eyes and witches' broth. Visitors will also have the opportunity to purchase chocolate treats and limited edition handmade pumpkin novelties from the World's Biggest Cadbury Shop.

In addition to these spooky activities, visitors can experience a wide variety of entertainment in its 14 different zones. Learn what makes Cadbury chocolate so devilishly delicious and travel back in time to meet the man behind the brand, John Cadbury.

Atmosphere

Diane Mitchell, marketing manager at Cadbury World, said: "Cadbury World is always a popular choice for people looking for chocolate treats and this year we've introduced a mix of activities to entertain the entire family.

"We're positive that whether you're young or old a trip to Cadbury World this Halloween is guaranteed to be a scream."

For more information about a visit to Cadbury World visit www.cadburyworld.co.uk website.

A spooky atmosphere will await visitors at the Ghostly Gaslight Halloween event at **Blisls Hill Victorian Town**, near Ironbridge in Shropshire, on the evening of Saturday, October 29.

As dusk falls, spooky antics are going to replace the normal everyday activities that take place at the open-air museum.

Weird apparitions will replace the friendly Victorians who are usually



Chocolate pumpkins, a terrifyingly tasty idea at Cadbury World in Birmingham this Halloween

seen in the own's shops, cottages and work places. Watch out for the village carpenter turned coffin maker who may ask you to test out his casket - make sure his hasn't got his hammer and nails handy!

This event will start at 6pm. Tickets must be purchased in advance, priced at £9 adults and £6 children aged 3-16 years. All under 16s must be accompanied by an adult, tickets will not be available on the gate and Ironbridge Gorge Museum Passports are not valid for this event.

For more information call 01952 433424 or visit the website at www.ironbridge.org.uk.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Edgbaston is offering to help keep the youngsters occupied during half term.

From Monday to Friday, October 24-28, admission to the Botanical Gardens will be free for children under 15, accompanied by at least one full paying adult (£7.50).

In addition there will also be special free activities each day from 1 to 4pm, including making witches on lolly sticks on Tuesday.

For further information call 0121 454 1860 or visit the gardens' website at www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk.



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thechronicle

Man gets fine for dog mess

A MAN who was caught letting a dog foul a grass verge in the Black Country without clearing it up has received a £115 court bill.

Donald Hornby, aged 20, was seen by Dudley Council officers walking a golden retriever outside houses in Park Road, Netherton. The dog messed on a grass verge before Hornby let it away, Dudley Magistrates Court heard.

Officers followed Hornby and took a photo of him. He was tracked down to his address in Compton Court, Baptist End Road, Netherton but claimed it was his brother walking the dog.

Hornby pleaded not guilty to being in charge of a dog and failing to remove faeces but was found guilty. He was fined £75 and ordered to pay £25 costs and a £15 victim surcharge.

End cash payments for scrap, says MP

Wedding venue is fit for royalty

THE scrap metal trade must be regulated with an end to cash-in-hand payments, demands a Black Country MP.

Ian Austin says the practice fuels metal thefts and has written to the Government asking for action. As prices soar thefts have rocketed in Dudley borough with police revealing that 200 drain covers were stolen over three weeks.

There is a national campaign to change the law so payments for scrap can only go into a bank account.

Menace

Mr Austin, Labour MP for Dudley North, said: "Metal theft has become a quiet menace. I want to see the rules tightened up to ensure that no scrap metal is sold without the seller providing verified identification and without a full record of each transaction. We need to see cash payments for scrap metal made illegal."

Earlier this year Conservative Chris Kelly, MP for Dudley South, met crime prevention minister James Brokenshire and revealed that the Home Office is looking at a cashless system.

IT IS a wedding venue fit for royalty. And now Himley Hall is aiming to tempt more couples to have their big day at the historic setting.

The Grade II listed house hosted the Duke and Duchess of Kent on their honeymoon in 1934.

Today, love remains in the air as the building is a venue for weddings and has staged a bridal fair to showcase ideas.

Stalls allowed people to browse for anything from wedding dresses to styling tips.

Designers held a catwalk show for brides-to-be.

Lucy Jordan and Gareth Elwell, both aged 29, from Tack Farm Road, Wordsley, will be celebrating their big day at the 18th century house next September.

"We had always loved Himley Hall and its setting in the park," said Lucy.

"It was a natural choice for us to have our wedding here."



Claire Green admires wedding dresses during the fair

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Keeper of Geology Graham Worton is pictured by one of the information boards

Wrens Nest heritage opened to everyone

A MULTI-MILLION pound scheme to open up Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve to visitors has reached its first milestone.

Over the past 18 months, artists, engineers and builders have been hard at work to flatten footpaths, put in new handrails, install a series of cast-iron works of art and create new viewing platforms for visitors.

The improvements are now open to the public, marking the end of the first phase of the ambitious project, which eventually aims to open up the Seven Sisters mines to canal and walking tours.

Dudley's borough geologist Graham Worton said the whole scheme had been designed to reflect both the natural and industrial heritage of Dudley.

A series of "story stones" have been installed as part of the work, telling first-person accounts of experiences of the mine. Workers are now looking to get more former miners to contribute to the story stones.

And an information board has been put at each viewing platform, explaining the science and significance behind what visitors can see.

Special

For example, at the 'ripples' themselves, the board describes how the rocks tell the tale of the seabed it once was – from the calm surface water, cast forever in limestone, to the swirling undercurrents and busy seabed, to a layer of volcanic rock from an eruption from a long-lost volcano millions of years ago.

Mr Worton said: "Having this window on time is pretty special, there is nowhere in the world which demonstrates the course of natural history quite so spectacularly."

"What we are doing is a huge undertaking. We want it to be the first mine and quarry site which is completely wheelchair accessible. Even the canal boats will have wheelchair lifts on them."

The caverns themselves, which have been fenced off to the public for the past nine years and were filled in in 2007, now have two new viewing platforms from different angles, in preparation for when one of the



Graham Worton on one of the viewing platforms that look towards the Silurian seabed, in the top left corner, over the basin of the reserve

caverns is transformed into a modern visitor centre.

Four new trails have been opened up, taking visitors on tours looking at the various important aspects of the mines such as its industrial and natural history.

Artworks have been dotted along

each of the trails, telling many different stories about the nature reserve, including why it is important to local people.

Following the completion of the access work, Mr Worton said, the next phase will be to reopen the canal tunnels to allow boats to get back in to explore the old limestone mines.

"The tunnels are in excellent shape with very strong brickwork, and it is the next easiest step," he said.

"It also means we can get engineers in through the canal tunnels to start work strengthening the mines, which is a much easier route than having to lower everything in through mine shafts."

This phase will not get started until after the 2012 Olympics however, as Mr Worton said more public funding is expected to become available then.



One of the new signs at the entrance to the reserve



A time periscope next to a Silurian seabed



One of several story stones installed around the site

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thechronicle



Councillor Adrian Turner outside the old Mount Pleasant School where the borough's most important historical documents are housed and, right, an artist's impression of the proposed new archives building

Setting the records straight on borough's £6m archives service

MOST of the windows are bricked up – but inside an uninviting shell of a building are some of the Black Country's greatest treasures, dating back to a document signed by the Pope in 1182.

The documents housed in Dudley's Archives and Local History Service give a fascinating insight into the lives of the borough's citizens, businesses, churches and civic leaders throughout the turbulent centuries.

Now the archives themselves are at the centre of some controversy – with the service due to move into £6 million state-of-the-art new premises next to the Black Country Living Museum, opposed by local campaigners who want to keep the records in its current base in a Victorian school building at Coseley.

The gems stored within hundreds of thousands of documents at the school include the papal "bull" – short for "bulla", the Latin term for a seal – signed by Pope Lucius III in 1182 granting permission for Dudley's Priory to be built.

Also there is the original design by landscape gardener Capability Brown for the grounds of Himley Hall – and the original pricing list and bill of sale, down to the last halfpenny, for the Titanic anchor, built by Noah Hingley and Sons in Netherthorpe.

The site is popular with members of the public who visit to learn more about the history of the area and even their own family.

Census

Retired maintenance man Derek Knowles has spent the last 10 years "trying to find" his great great grandfather.

Mr Knowles aged 67, of Southfield Grove, Wolverhampton, visits the archives several times a year to check census and parish church records on microfilm in the hunt for more information about Thomas Knowles for a family tree he is building up.

"Once you've started on this trail it's like a drug and you just can't stop," said Mr Knowles.

At least 20 people a day visit the archives centre and, at times, it is so busy that appointments have to be made for visitors to come in.

Dudley planners gave the go-ahead last week. Work on the Tipton Road site is expected to start in January and the site open to visitors in summer 2013.

But first large-scale groundwork is needed to get rid of potentially dangerous gases and contamination.

Councillors said the hi-tech building was much-needed to help with the town's regeneration. The Mount Pleasant School archives site will be redeveloped for housing.

Protesters, including Dudley North MP Ian Austin, say the council had not done enough to explore the possibility of extending and improving the facilities at Mount Pleasant. With loan repayments, the total cost to taxpayers of the £6 million building will be £13.8 million but council planning officers and archives staff say the school building does not provide the right environment to control the humidity and temperature required for the storage of old documents.

Protect

The bricked up, unwelcoming facade of the school, which still has its entrances for "boys" and "girls", is necessary to protect its contents from light that could damage documents.

The proposed, purpose-built archives centre will include a new high-tech conservation studio, educational facilities, the right environment for storing the documents and enough space for the next 25 years' worth of documents.

Kate Millin, Black Country Library Services project manager, said: "We have outgrown the space available here and we know that refurbishing and extending an old building like this would cost more than a new building."

Councillor Adrian Turner, cabinet member for housing, libraries and adult learning, added: "These archives have been given to us in good faith by people and they expect that we will look after them and make them available for people that follow us."

"In years to come, when even our children won't be here, the records will still be around provided we look after them properly."

The plans were unanimously approved by Dudley Council's development control committee.

Committee chairman Councillor Colin Wilson said: "I have never known a set of plans to tick all the right boxes like this."

Superb

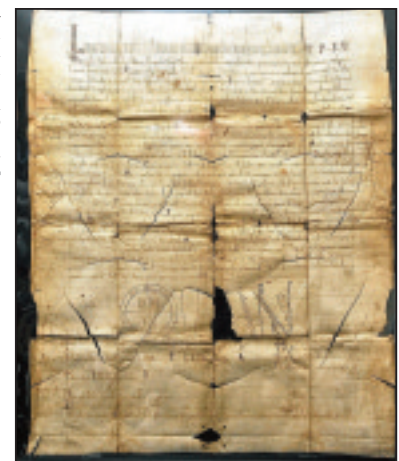
"The state-of-the-art technology of this building is superb and it will preserve the area's history for generations to come."

Building work will now get under way in the coming weeks and it is expected to be completed by summer 2013.

But potentially dangerous ground gases and "significant" land contamination have been found at the site, with large-scale groundwork needed before construction can begin.

Work to demolish the old Royal Brierley Crystal building began earlier this month, and investigations into the ground contamination will be carried out when the site has been fully cleared.

As approval is finally given for Dudley's new archive centre, **LOUISE JEW** has a look at some of the treasures it will hold



The oldest document in the archives, the papal bull, signed by Pope Lucius III in 1182, granting permission for Dudley's priory to be built



Robert Loach looks through records at the Mount Pleasant centre



Black Country Libraries project manager Kate Millin, left, Councillor Adrian Turner and local studies librarian Diane Matthews look at the plans by Capability Brown for the gardens in Himley Park which are dated 1774

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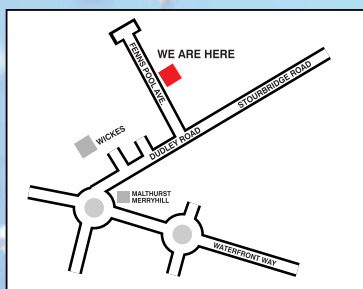


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thechronicle

College provides unique trophies for ceremony

It's clear where to find the glass skills

By Tim Spiers

tim.spiers@expressandstar.co.uk

PUPILS from a Stourbridge college were looking forward to showing off their creative talents at an awards ceremony today.

Students from Amblecote-based Glasshouse College have been busy designing, manufacturing and engraving unique trophies that will be presented at Dudley CVS's Dudley Volunteer Awards.

The college offered its services when a call was put out for special trophies to be presented at the annual celebration.

A group of creative students volunteered have produced 13 unique engraved sculptures that will be handed out by the mayor of Dudley, Councillor Michael Evans, during the ceremony.

Delighted

Awards will be presented in categories ranging from youth and community action to the Gordon Lindsay Award for long service, in memory of a former Dudley CVS chairman.

Andy Gray, Dudley CVS chief officer, said, "We were delighted when Glasshouse College offered to make trophies and are even more pleased with the results."

"They have produced unique and beautiful pieces of glass that will be treasured by each and every volunteer who is presented with one."

"It is also fantastic that the students are embracing volunteering and are supporting their local community."

"We would like to say a heartfelt thank-you and wish them continued success."

The college provides a learning environment for 87 young people with social behavioural and learning difficulties.



Teacher Roger Holloway, back, with students who have created glass trophies at Glasshouse College for the Dudley Volunteer Awards. From left, Sam Robinson, Neale Walton and Hardeep Bhamra. Inset, a trophy.

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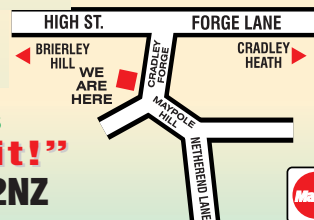


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Chance to make a date with the Calendar Girls

AN ALL-STAR cast comes to Wolverhampton for hit show **Calendar Girls**, about a group of WI ladies who pose nude for a charity calendar.

Getting their kit off in the best possible taste for the comedy at *The Grand* are Lynda Bellingham from TV's *Loose Women*, former *Hi-De-Hi* star Ruth Madoc, former *Rock Follies*, *Coronation Street* and *Celebrity Big Brother* star Rula Lenska, West End performer Jennifer Ellison, ex-*Howards Way* star Jan Harvey, *The Smoking Room*'s Debbie Chazen, *Strictly Come Dancing*'s Camilla Dallerup, with Bruno Langley and Joe McGann representing the men. It's on from Monday to Saturday, October 24 to 29.

Following its phenomenal success in London's West End last summer, high octane Ballroom and Salsa extravaganza **Burn The Floor** is coming to Birmingham Hippodrome, where 20 world class dancers will set the stage on fire from Tuesday to Saturday, October 25 to 29.

The show's global success is largely owed to director and choreographer Jason Gilkison. His talent has seen him head hunted by the BBC to bring his choreography skills to the current series of *Strictly Come Dancing*. Personally working with the celebrities and professional partners, Jason has been spending countless hours tailoring and perfecting the dazzling performances millions witness on Saturday nights.

Champion

There are currently four former *Burn The Floor* cast members starring in the prime time show, including *Strictly* reigning champion Artem Chigvintsev, Robin Windsor, Natalie Lowe plus new addition Pascha Kovalev. Fellow alumni Anya Garnis and Tristan MacManus shone in US dance show *Dancing With The Stars*, while former colleagues Ashleigh Di Lello and her husband Ryan were strong competitors in the popular US dance competition, *So You Think You Can Dance*.

Tracie Bennett continues with her acclaimed portrayal of the middle-aged Judy Garland in *End of the Rainbow* at the Hippodrome to Saturday.

James Corden stars in the National Theatre's new comedy *One Man Two Guvnors*, which ends its run at Birmingham's New Alex on Saturday. Then the Alex hosts *Roary The Racing Car* at 1pm on Monday, an evening performance by psychic *Sally Morgan* on Tuesday and Colin Gold plays *Billy Fury* backed by the actual *Tornadoes* in *Halfway To Paradise* on Wednesday night.

Comedy gigs include a 5pm *Audience with Pam Ayres*, the gentle comic poet, on Sunday at Birmingham Town Hall. Salford comedian *Jason Manford* is at the LG Arena on Wednesday. Squeaky-voiced king of the jungle *Joe Pasquale* is at the Wulfrun Hall next Thursday, October 27.

Joe sees no more barriers to his solo singing career



Joe Jonas of top American pop group The Jonas Brothers is appearing as Britney Spears' special guest at the LG Arena after releasing his urban R&B-style solo debut album

AMERICAN pop star Joe Jonas is loving life as a solo artist but promises fans that the Jonas Brothers have not split up.

The 22-year-old middle brother from the hugely popular sibling trio, who won a generation of fans via their Disney movies and television shows, spoke to *The Chronicle* during a visit to the UK to promote his debut solo album *FastLife* and to prepare for his tour with superstar Britney Spears.

The dark-haired heart-throb, whose latest hit video, *See No More*, notched up five million views on YouTube and Vevo, revealed that he could soon be making his movie acting debut.

"This is going to be a crazy few weeks but I am excited," said the Arizona-born singer. "Britney is great. I did one show with her in New Jersey. She is going to be a fun tour partner. It will be pretty cool to hear I Did It Again - hers was the first record I ever bought."

Joe will be her special guest at selected dates when Britney makes her comeback this month, including a concert at the LG Arena, Birmingham, on Sunday, October 30.

But what can the gig goers expect from Joe? "Very high energy. I just want to get them dancing, get them standing up. I feel like I'm not doing my job unless everyone's standing up and rocking out," he said.

The Camp Rock star has already had a preview of the Wembley Arena when he attended the BBC Teen Awards, which included meeting up with Britain's latest pop sensations, One Direction, featuring Wolverhampton's Liam Payne.

"I got to meet the One Direction guys and thought they were really

Joe Jonas talks to Leon Burakowski about his solo debut album, going on tour with Britney Spears and the future for the Jonas Brothers

nice, really cool and I was really happy to meet them," said Joe.

"The current UK music scene is really amazing, it's definitely getting better and better. Every time I'm here I find new artists and things that I really love listening to."

"Pixie Lott is a good friend of mine and I love her music. Her new stuff sounds incredible."

Maybe he gave One Direction some tips on dealing with excited fans, as the Jonas Brothers have had hordes of car chasing admirers.

"Yes, I have been asked to sign just about every body part. A baby was probably the oddest... they were like sign this baby's forehead". That was kind of an interesting one."

Energy

He is a big fan of keeping in touch with the fans, saying: "Twitter is a great tool. You can hear what the fans think right away. You see the tweets and feed off their energy right away."

On his new album Joe has collaborated with top writers and producers including Chris Brown and Lil Wayne, which has helped a musical transition from pop to a more R&B influenced sound. Released on Monday, October 24, *FastLife* is also the first Jonas release to get a parental warning sticker.

Asked who he would like to collaborate with, Joe said: "I like Kanye West and would really like to do something with him, that would be really interesting. British artists like Adele, Tinie Tempah, Foster The People, something a little different from what I'm

used to. It shows a different side to the music that I am making."

He also revealed that he may be making a movie. "There is a movie I am developing back in the States with a buddy of mine, a producer friend. We have got a writer now, it's coming together and it's very exciting."

But what genre? Action, sci-fi, romance? "It's kinda everything," he replied. "It is too early to say what it's about but I am excited to have this idea grow."

Doesn't Joe sometimes miss having brothers Nick and Kevin at his side? "It's a little bit scary to be up there by myself but I've been getting great support. My brothers have been very supportive. They're incredible and I'm really thankful for the fact that they're happy for me to take my time and do my thing."

"I wanted to really spend time on this album, to take my time to make sure I made music that I was really proud of. There's been some times with my brothers that we've done some things and really rushed them, like making records quickly. I wanted to take my time with this one."

"It's cool to be back in the UK and to be able to do my solo stuff here. I'm just happy. I love shopping here and I love the fashion, it's so great to see the fans and travel the world."

As for the band getting back together, he said: "We are definitely still a band. We are going to be making music together again when the time is right."

"Right now we are just focusing on our individual projects. The time will come around to make more music together. We are always writing... maybe in the next year or so we will release another album."

And would he bring his brothers to tour Europe? "I would love to get that tour together, we have got so many good friends over here."

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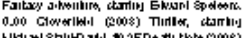
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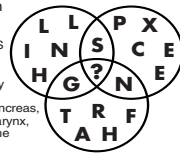
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Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
The letter represented by the question mark is P. Pancreas, Appendix, Pharynx, all organs of the human body.

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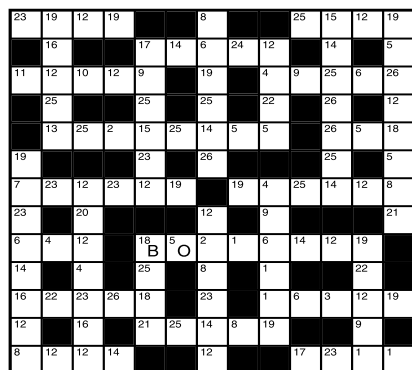
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
L	B	O	K	J	Z	Q	Y	G	T	I	V	P
D	S	E	H	W	U	F	X	A	M	N	R	C

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Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- How one is caught holding no black cards? (3-6)
- A flowery greeting from simple islanders (3)
- This may come between neighbours (6,5)
- Still, such people can't bel (7)
- Can, for example, turn to colour (5)
- Work hard with an advertising phrase (6)
- Worshiped bustle and colour (6)
- Animal arrived and left shortly afterwards (5)
- Fabulous horseman (7)
- An engagement, in the main (5,6)
- Towards the Orient on foot (3)
- Oppose an insect repellent (9)

Down

- Time to come out of the rain (3)
- A light abreast of the vessel (5)
- To desert is a failing (6)
- It is not, indeed, meant! (7)
- To tell the truth, one may make it (5,6)
- He can see what the speaker means (3-6)
- Redeeming feature of a kidnapping (6,5)
- Abuse an awkward seed box (9)
- A bath is needed to wash this (3,4)
- Fish - or fishmongers - may have them (6)
- Approaches some chemists to examine arsenic (5)
- Leonard comes in briefly to lend a hand (3)

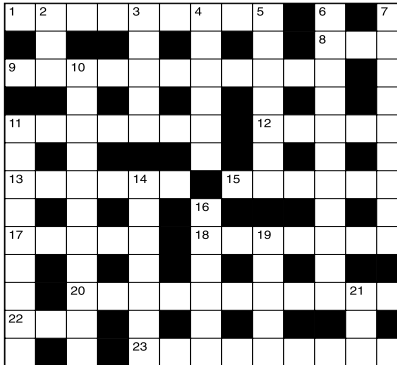
Quick Clues:

Across

- Flute-players (9)
- Regret (3)
- As an example (3,8)
- Hold back (7)
- Throw out (5)
- Pitches (6)
- Abandon (6)
- Banish (5)
- Maintains (7)
- Change direction (5,6)
- Consume (3)
- Having a disease of the joints (9)

Down

- Zodiac sign (3)
- Male singer (5)
- Sofa (6)
- Genuine (7)
- Ancestor (11)
- Ponders (9)
- Revive (11)
- Withdrew (9)
- Voter (7)
- Penetrate (6)
- Rage (5)
- Snow runner (3)



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Eleven; 8 Spools; 10 Baffled; 11 Caber; 12 Lief; 13 Decay; 17 Fires; 18 Veto; 22 Heart; 23 Thrones; 24 Pigeon; 25 Belong. Down: 1 Netball; 2 Set free; 3 Peals; 4 Special; 5 Booby; 6 Usury; 9 Adherents; 14 Fiction; 15 Leans on; 16 Corsage; 19 Chips; 20 Barge; 21 Order. QUICK - Across: 7 Equine; 8 Bother; 10 Umbrage; 11 False; 12 Sole; 13 Quest; 17 Guide; 18 Jer; 22 Anger; 23 Newness; 24 Tender; 25 Action. Down: 1 Request; 2 Quibble; 3 Sneak; 4 Confess; 5 While; 6 Brief; 9 Redundant; 14 Quarrel; 15 Demerit; 16 Present; 19 Earth; 20 Agony; 21 Twice.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	3	5	1	9	8	7	2	6
7	8	9	5	2	6	3	1	4
9	4	2	7	3	6	8	1	5
5	6	8	2	1	9	4	7	3
3	1	7	8	6	5	2	9	4
6	5	1	3	4	7	2	9	8
2	7	9	6	1	8	5	4	3
8	9	4	2	5	1	3	7	6

		2		3		8		
3			5				2	
4	1			8				9
	9		5	2	6			
1			4	6				2
	3	9	8		5			
9		2				5	7	
	2			7	3		6	
		4		1				



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thechronicle

Danger driver gets jail for horror crash

A DRIVER who ploughed into a grandmother's car, leaving her with life-threatening injuries has been jailed for more than three years.

Tejinder Singh Chumber was speeding on New Swan Lane in West Bromwich when he lost control.

Riddle of holiday death fall

THE mysterious death of an Amblecote man while holidaying in Mexico may never be solved, a coroner said.

Dudley Coroner's Court heard that Rejinder Singh was found on the ground, eight storeys below the balcony outside his room at the Hotel Royal in Cancun.

Evidence from across the Atlantic stated that a staff member saw Mr Singh, aged 43, of Oak Hill Drive leaning on the balcony with a bottle of water the night before he was found dead on May 11.

Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain said Mr Singh was divorced and unemployed, but had a "normal life" with a good relationship with his family and had never tried to hurt himself before.

He recorded an open verdict at the hearing on October 6.

Mr Balmain said there appeared to be footprints on the outside ledge of the balcony. "But I simply have no evidence that these apparent footprints are in any way connected to Mr Singh," he said. "The evidence is just incomplete."

It happened during a dangerous overtaking manoeuvre and he smashed into 53-year-old Rosemary Ward's car, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Miss Rhiannon Jones, prosecuting, said Mrs Ward, of Blackheath, was driving home in her Vauxhall Corsa at around 5.30pm on Saturday, February 12.

Chumber was driving in the opposite direction in his Rover 200 1.8 litre turbo car.

Miss Jones said a witness estimated Chumber's speed at around 80mph and added: "Crash investigation experts do not believe that is an exaggeration."

Chumber, of Jonah Road, Tipton, lost control of the car when he tried to pull back onto his side of the road after seeing Mrs Ward's car ahead of him. The side of his car smashed into the front of her vehicle.

Mrs Ward has had 30 operations and is confined to a wheelchair.

Chumber, aged 28, denied driving at speed in the 30mph zone but admitted dangerous driving and inflicting grievous bodily harm. He was jailed for 40 months and banned for six years.

Christmas fair

THE Friends of St John's Church, Hagley, are organising a Christmas fair on November 26, from 11am-1pm at the village community centre.

Double win for Helen



Halesowen hairdresser Helen Tether with her trophy
HALESOWEN hairdresser Helen Tether is on top of the world after clinching an international title for the second year running. Helen, aged 29, has also doubled her workforce in a year and her Sensu salon, in Queensway, now employs six people.

After winning the La Biosthetique International Beauty Stylist cut category trophy for the second time, her photograph will appear in salons across the world.

"Winning the title last year was amazing but to do it again is marvellous," said Helen, who lives in George Road, Halesowen. She previously ran her business from Chenevare Mews in Kinver and moved a year ago. She won the competition in a grand final at Paris.


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Madness, delusion, confusion and code

Future Science – edited by Max Brockman
(Oxford University Press, paperback, £9.99)

ESSENTIAL reading for science students and fans of popular science, this is a collection of cutting-edge essays from a new generation of scientists talent-spotted by Max Brockman from the Edge Foundation.

The short but informative chapters range over a wide variety of topics. These include the mind-bending subject of infinity, the digital detritus of social networking, new thoughts on the human mind including the importance of shame and how attractiveness works, plant immunity and climate change, and how the search for alien life will probably take place inside ice-encased extraterrestrial oceans. Some articles are more reader friendly than others. However, this collection of 19 essays (from mostly American academics) bubble with new ideas. I am pleased that it is probably the first in a new series.

Six-Legged Soldiers – Jeffrey A Lockwood
(Oxford University Press, paperback, £9.99)

SINCE a stone age man first hit on the idea of throwing a wasp's nest into an enemy's cave, human beings have been recruiting insects for use in war. The Romans, Mayans, Mongols and Crusaders utilised stinging insects for the pain and terror they could inflict upon the enemy. In the 14th century there was an even an almost Gatling gun-like windmill contraption for firing hives at an enemy.

Even as recently as the Vietnam War, the Viet Cong would use their jungle knowledge to relocate colonies of aggressive honeybees to routes used by the American soldiers and then set off their "tree mine" with a firecracker.

More horrific is the use of insects as instruments of torture. The deeply unpleasant 19th century Uzbek emir Nasrullah Bahadur-Khan had a bug pit in which he would plunge prisoners, including two unfortunate British envoys, to be slowly gnawed to death by the aptly-named assassin bugs.

The scariest chapter, *Entomological Evil*, details how insects were used for spreading disease in the Far East during the Second World War, such as the uji bombs that Imperial Japan dropped on China. These were porcelain bulbs full of plague-infected fleas that would be shattered at a height of 500 feet. When these were not killing Chinese people quickly enough, they directly sprayed the fleas from airplanes. Scenarios of how terrorists could employ insects are utterly chilling. As if these creatures were not lethal enough, Professor Lockwood looks to a future when insects are enhanced or replicated by scientists. Looks like we're going to need a bigger swat.

The Ascent of the Detective – Haia Shpayer-Makov
(Oxford University Press, hardback, £30)

POOR Inspector Lestrade of the Yard, I always thought Sherlock Holmes was a little dismissive of the police detective. This first major study of English police detectives in the 19th and early 20th centuries, by a history professor from the University of Haifa, looks at both the real Lestrades and his fictional fellows. She looks at how these men became detectives, their working conditions and differences from uniformed officers, their relationship with the press and how their image developed in popular fiction. The author gathers a wealth of information presented with sparse but effective illustrations, though I suspect her writing style will be a little too dry for casual readers.

POPULAR SCIENCE & NON FICTION



On the right track

Great Railway Maps of the World – Mark Ovenden
(Penguin, hardback, £20)

A HANDSOME tome for map obsessives to pour over, from the same rail fanatic who authored *Metro Maps of the World*.

There are many colourful maps drawn from nearly two hundred years of rail history, beginning with the heights schematic of the Liverpool to Manchester line serviced by Robert Stephenson's Planet and Northumbria engines.

The first key stop on the journey is the first national railway map from 1839 and a cornucopia of rail cartography follows, with a special focus on the transcontinental railways including America's iron horse expansion across the plains and the Trans-Siberian Railway which began in Tsarist Russia. The networks of France, China, even Saudi Arabia are included.

Elegance

Thought is given to the different styles of design, contrasting the simple elegance of Harry Beck's classic 1933 London Tube map with the curvaceous if bewildering Tokyo regional rail map 2009 by Kim Ji-hwan.

My only criticism is that the dimensions of the book don't always do justice to the detailed maps, many intricate works of art in their own right.

But if you are an armchair traveller who has ever been captivated by maps or the romance of the railways, these illustrations will be a delight to your eyes as Ovenden relates the history of a form of transport that girdled the earth in four million kilometres of track.

Leon Burakowski

What Is Madness? – Darian Leader
(Hamish Hamilton, hardback, £20)

PRACTISING psychoanalyst Darian Leader draws a distinction between *being* mad and *going* mad in this accessible exploration of madness and sanity. He does show that the difference between the two is not always clear and takes issue with generally held views of what madness is, or indeed when it is serious enough to warrant intervention.

He was inspired to re-examine the boundaries of madness by an early experience in his career when he met a man undergoing therapy who seemed perfectly normal, in fact, he was bright, intelligent and eloquent. Weeks went by and they would meet and chat about a range of topics then one day, without missing a beat, the patient casually included in the conversation that he lived in Xamara, a land populated by wild animals and exotic gods.

Madness is often represented on television and in the media by violent outbursts, the sudden detonation of someone 'going mad'. Leader looks at the more perplexing world of 'quiet madness'. But before you think we are in the realm of eccentrics, such as those no-hope X Factor contestants, Leader considers in detail the case of serial killer GP Harold Shipman. This was a man who seemed the epitome of normality and respectability, appreciated and liked by many of his patients, and he was all the more lethal for it.

The reader may not agree with all Leader's theories but it is certainly a thought-provoking book which challenges simplistic views on mental health.

Is That A Fish In Your Ear? Translation and the meaning of everything – David Bellos
(Penguin, hardback, £20)

PRINCETON professor and translator of many French works of literature, Bellos examines the inexact art of translation and its importance, especially in an English-speaking world which seems to view learning other languages as an unnecessary chore.

Things were not always so, across the world where speakers of different languages lived side by side they would learn each other's lingo and become multi-linguists. Up to a hundred years ago or so, the well-educated may also have had classical Greek and Latin to call upon.

When every language has a collective baggage of centuries of tradition, history and an inherent cultural mindset, it becomes apparent that anything but the most literal translation – stripped of nuance, rhythm and poetry – is fraught with danger... that's why the instructions for putting that flat-packed wardrobe together may be incomprehensible.

For a linguist or anyone with more than a passing interest in translation, Bellos's book is a perceptive and interesting read, bringing the subject up to date with thoughts on computer-aided translation. If you've ever used Google Translate, you know that computers are a long way off solving the problems posed by trying to understand or write in a language other than your mother tongue.



Was the Challenger disaster the result of self-deception at Nasa?

Deceit and Self-Deception – Robert Trivers
(Allen Lane, hardback, £25)

HARVARD educated social biologist Trivers is a maverick thinker and his Darwinian theory of self-deception, as a natural tool to help both individuals and societies attain their goals, is persuasive. He uses examples ranging from the insect world to international relationships to build his case, including some shocking particular examples, such as how Nasa apparently lied to itself over safety issues which led to the Challenger and Columbia disasters.

His views on religion and false historic narratives are controversial, and he has won praise from *The God Delusion* author Richard Dawkins.

It is heartening that Trivers doesn't think we should give in to self-deception, concluding that one's life should not be built on lies. However, his solutions do reveal him as a Californian hippy.

Secret Language – Barry J Blake
(Oxford University Press, paperback, £8.99)

SLANG, cyphers and codes to conceal meanings from the outsider while letting the insiders talk without fear of discovery or censure are explored in this fascinating survey of the variations on the Queen's English by a professor of linguistics.

Secret languages, such as the centuries-old cants used by sailors and criminals, Cockney rhyming slang and the gay argot of Polari with its Italian and Yiddish influences, are put in their historical context as the scholarly but inclusive Blake examines an array of perplexing word play. His study encompasses anagrams and riddles, allusions, jargon and euphemisms, religious mysteries and runes, magic words and the cracking of Nazi Germany's Enigma code.

The English language is an endlessly fascinating subject because it is always in a state of flux, with new codes developing all the time. Don't LOL but some1 will need to transL8 this sentence. Sick innit?

Leon Burakowski

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Regency the prince of sales

Four homes snapped up on development

WHEN Regency Place, the latest development from quality Midland Builders Kendrick Homes went on sale in Kingswinford a month ago, the selling agents Lee Shaw could have been forgiven for their cautious approach.

With all the worrying news around lately – from Europe and elsewhere – this might not have seemed like the ideal moment to launch six upscale new four-bedroom homes onto the market.

But in these troubled times, Regency Place is a pleasing success story. After just four weeks, four of the six homes at Barnett Lane, Kingswinford are already sold.

"With Kendrick Homes I'm always confident that we'll get the sales," said Peter Davenport, principal of Lee Shaw.

"But in the current climate, I wasn't expecting that things would move this quickly. I should have known better.

"With so few really high quality new homes available, Regency Place was bound to create a lot of interest.

"I know that it's a cliché, but there's no denying that quality counts."

Enclave

Taking a good look at the layouts and the specification there's also no denying that Kendrick have come up trumps again.

With their usual painstaking planning and attention to detail, they have created an enticing enclave just off Barnett Lane in which each of the six homes is different, with each carefully designed to make best possible use of their location.

There is a sales office open at Regency Place between 11am and 5pm, Thursday through Monday.
Telephone: 01384 287622 or 07896 886448.



After just four weeks on sale there are now just two remaining homes available at Regency Place, Barnett Lane, Kingswinford

Finding that big deposit

RAISING a large enough deposit is often the biggest barrier to buying a place of your own.

But help is at hand for anyone with a good income but a low deposit looking to buy a new home from Barratt West Midlands.

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**PEDMORE
10 MEON RISE**

£1200 pcm

Modern detached house in a superb location ■ three reception rooms, spacious breakfast kitchen, utility ■ five bedrooms, two with en-suites and fitted wardrobes ■ bathroom ■ rear garden with patio area, double garage, off road parking, c/h, d/g.



**WALL HEATH
22 BROOKSIDE WAY**

£750 pcm

Modern semi detached house in a cul de sac position ■ through lounge/dining room ■ breakfast kitchen, utility/garage ■ four bedrooms, master with built in wardrobes, bathroom ■ rear garden with decking and pond, c/h, d/g.



**KINGSWINFORD
34 MURDOCH DRIVE**

£650 pcm

Modern mid town house in a convenient location ■ rear lounge, kitchen with integrated appliances ■ three bedrooms, master with ensuite shower ■ family bathroom ■ electric gate to garage, rear garden, c/h, d/g.



**KINGSWINFORD
HIGHFIELD
STALLINGS LANE**

£595 pcm

Traditional semi detached house ■ hall, front lounge, breakfast kitchen with modern fitted units ■ three bedrooms, family bathroom inc. shower ■ rear garden with patio area, garage ■ oil fuelled central heating, d/g.



**TIVIDALE
41 ST BRADES CLOSE**

£595 pcm

Modern semi detached house ■ entrance lobby, through lounge/dining room ■ fitted kitchen with various appliances ■ 2 bedrooms, family bathroom with fitted suite inc. shower ■ garage, lawned rear garden, c/h, d/g



**MERRY HILL
29 MADISON AVENUE**

£575 pcm

Modern three storey town house on the popular development fronting Merry Hill ■ kitchen, dining room, lounge ■ three bedrooms master, en-suite shower, bathroom ■ one parking space, c/h, d/g, alarmed



**HAGLEY
32 NEWLANDS CLOSE**

£550 pcm

Ground floor apartment on a popular development ■ lounge area, kitchen recess ■ two bedrooms, en-suite shower, bathroom ■ one parking space, electric heating, d/g.



**MERRY HILL
52 COLUMBUS AVENUE**

£525 pcm

Exclusive penthouse apartment ■ lounge, kitchen recess with integrated appliances ■ two bedrooms, master with balcony area and en-suite shower ■ one designated parking space, c/h, d/g



**MERRY HILL
46 MADISON AVENUE**

£525 pcm

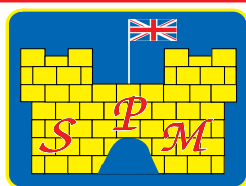
Stylish third floor apartment in a convenient location ■ spacious lounge with modern kitchen recess ■ two bedrooms, master with ensuite, bathroom ■ one designated parking space, c/h, d/g.



**WORDSLEY
30 SURREY DRIVE**

£495 pcm

Modern mews town house ■ lounge with coal effect marble style fireplace ■ dining room and fitted kitchen ■ two bedrooms, house bathroom inc. shower ■ communal gardens, two parking spaces, c/h, part d/g



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BRIERLEY HILL NEW



FOXDALE DRIVE
£395 pcm
 Modern property, lounge, kitchen, one bedroom, bathroom with shower, electric heating, off road parking.

DUDLEY NEW



DONNINGTON COURT
£470 pcm
 Ground Floor Flat, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished

OLDBURY NEW



REGENT COURT
£510 pcm
 Modern Apartment. Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, En Suite to Master, Store, Gas Central Heating. No pets.

KINGSWINFOR NEW



COT LANE
£695 pcm
 Detached Bungalow, Large Lounge, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Carpets & Curtains, Double Glazing, Unfurnished, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

OLDBURY NEW



MEHDI ROAD
£625 pcm
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Your essential guide to the world of motoring compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

John Cooper Coupe is Mini's sporty flagship

IN THE space of a decade, BMW has achieved something many thought impossible.

Since 2001 its Mini range has clocked up two million sales and is available in 90 markets around the world. Not bad for something cynics thought would be a fashion flash in the pan.

Part of that success can be attributed to the regular introduction of new bodystyles. The original three-door hatch spawned a convertible, then a 'mini' estate and more recently a full four-seat compact SUV, the Countryman.

You can now add a two-seat coupe to the list, a variant Mini executives hope will attract buyers seeking a more focused and sporty experience.

Its arrival also positions the Coupe alongside the likes of Peugeot's popular RCZ coupe, a car that's done wonders for its maker's image.

The Mini Coupe performs its duties as a halo model for the rest of the range with aplomb. Its heavily raked windscreen and low-slung profile is the most dramatic look yet for a Mini.

Although width and length dimensions are near identical to the hatch, the Coupe's height is 29mm lower. And, thanks to its equally rakish rear screen, you're left in no doubt that the Coupe is a strict two-seater. Fear not on the practicality front, though.

With a hatchback tailgate that opens to reveal a maximum volume of 280 litres plus a through-load slot into the cabin, it's on par with the estate-like Clubman. Up front there's the usual oddment spaces you'll find in any Mini.

Along with its looks, the Mini Coupe has been designed to behave a little different on the road.

With its firmer suspension set up, the Coupe has been designed to deliver a more focused experience for the keen driver. As such, there's noticeably less roll through corners and there's a greater willingness to change direction.

Character

Thankfully such changes haven't resulted in a reduction in the quality of the car's ride. Yes, it's a bit stiffer than a regular three-door hatch, but you get to keep your fillings at the end of a journey.

The trade-off is a more chuckable and engaging drive, which is what you'd expect from a two-seat coupe.

Reinforcing the car's sporty character is an engine line-up comprised of Mini's more powerful diesel and petrol units.

There's no One or One D here, as the Coupe range starts with the familiar Cooper badge and its 122 horsepower offering.

The Cooper S shares the Cooper's 1.6 petrol unit but adds a turbo to produce 184 horsepower, while the John Cooper Works variant's output from the same motor is a heady 211 horsepower.

Diesel fans can opt for the Cooper SD, which has a 2.0-litre turbo unit outputting 143 horsepower. It also offers the lowest emissions and economy performance – 114g/km and 65.7mpg respectively.

But which is the best in the real world? All the engines have proven themselves in other Mini variants, most recently the diesel in hatch, convertible and Countryman models.

There's no question that the combination of wallet-friendly economy, 143 horsepower and a substantial 225lb/ft torque make for relaxed yet brisk performance.

Overtaking is quick and safe and there's enough low down grunt to make the traffic light grand prix entertaining.

The diesel's trademark growl when pushed hard is also appealing, but if you want the performance to match the Coupe's looks, then it has to be the John Cooper Works experience.

Rapid replaces brisk when dealing with performance, while the diesel has been elbowed out of the way by the impatient-sounding howl.

Like the diesel variant, the petrol needs to exercise some restraint in the wet if it doesn't want to light up front tyres at every junction, but in the dry, car changes direction quickly and the urgency of its engine noise encourages you

pedal a little faster on familiar roads.

Factor in a surprisingly compliant ride despite its sporty character and a short, slick manual gearshift, and the Coupe experience easily becomes a fun one.

Part of that fun comes before you've even signed the cheque.

With a plethora of options to help customise your purchase, Mini offers everything from colour-coded cabin trim, satnav, sports seats and different wheel designs to suede-trimmed steering wheels and contrasting body stripes.

Back in 2001 few independent high hopes for the brand.

From a small door to the rear of the car, the range has even far

complete with their own personalities.

The Coupe is proof that there's plenty of life left in the brand, and its own sporty personality is genuine and infectious.



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Nissan's back-room boys show off a sharp portfolio



Standing out for performance is Nissan's GT-R – a superb piece of engineering



The twin-turbocharged V8 produces a massive 523bhp for stunning acceleration

By Chris Lilly

THE Nissan Charged Tour was a real showcase for engineering prowess.

The guys in the Japanese firm's engine department have really been earning their wages recently.

The headline offering at the tour was, surprisingly, the new Micra DIG-S. The last part of the model name is the key to that as it becomes the Micra's flagship engine.

Nissan has placed a 1.2-litre powerplant up front and supercharged it. Not in the name of performance – that's a happy bonus.

Thanks to supercharging and efficiency-biased technologies, the Micra DIG-S has almost 100bhp, a 0-62mph time of 11.3 seconds yet 63mpg on the combined cycle and emissions below the key 100g/km mark, so you don't have to pay road tax to drive a nippy city car.

The ride and handling are set up for town driving but Nissan would have made a mistake had it tried to make the DIG-S a hot hatch.

The Micra has a decent amount of grunt but isn't sporty, which means it will cope with potholes and speed bumps. The steering is light and accurate and good all-round visibility makes parking nice and simple.

The excellent engine is the main feature. It pulls well when needed but will run about town in low revs easily, conserving petrol. It is one of the best in the supermini class.

To put it into perspective, the emission and fuel figures are close to matching the diesels, with better performance and it has made a good all-round small car even better.

Almost overshadowing the Micra DIG-S was the Leaf, Nissan's all-electric family car. No fuel is burnt under the bonnet and no emissions leave the exhaust pipe either – partly because there is no exhaust pipe.

The Leaf is, electric considerations aside, a good family car. There's plenty of space for four adults with good boot space, though that's to be expected with the Mégane-style, big-bum boot.

Stylish

One thing that must be considered is the rear footwell. Because the batteries fit under the floor, it's shallow and gives little space for toes under the front seats. Otherwise, legroom is good in a stylish and practical cabin. The cream interior adds to the light and airy feel and the dark centre console is a practical information centre. There is so much information from the dashboard that it really helps maximise the amount of power you can get from the Leaf's batteries.

There are a number of different systems to extract precious miles. The gauge above the speedometer shows how much power you're using and works in reverse, showing energy recouped and you quickly work out the best way to make the most of the energy-saving systems. The best way to save is to avoid the open road.

Staying at constant speed and revs gives little or no chance to gain energy as there are few opportunities to brake.

The other way is to put the gearbox into eco-mode, which limits power used, and use the normal mode like a supercharger you turn on and off when you want acceleration.

When you put your foot down, you see the electric motor's party trick – a lot of torque instantly available for pleasantly surprising acceleration. It helps make the Leaf a viable, if initially pricey, alternative if you rarely go more than 80 miles or so per trip.

Talking of surprising acceleration brings me to the Juke DIG-T. The turbocharged engine in this small SUV makes the Juke seem like a hot hatch. More surprising is that Nissan has designed the handling to match the performance.

The 1.6-litre turbo engine gives an acceleration figure of eight seconds from 0-62mph and the handling suits the engine's responsiveness with impressive grip and even more impressive lack of body roll.

If you want performance, the most startling engine of all the cars on test was squeezed under the bonnet of the Nissan GT-R – a superb piece of engineering.

The twin-turbocharged V8 produces a massive 523bhp which offers simply stunning acceleration. Every time you decide to accelerate hard, you feel yourself hanging on tightly, and grinning madly before you realise the speed limit is rapidly approaching and you back off very quickly.

In short, Nissan's engineers are pulling out all the stops in every department – from eco-friendly family models to all-out supercars through the more difficult challenges of combining efficiency with performance.

And on this evidence, the Japanese manufacturer is setting itself up nicely for the future.



The Leaf ticks the boxes for a good family car

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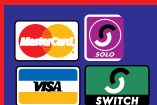
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sport

Farrington stars with two tries

ONs hit back with an Ian Rogers try, converted by fly-half Tom Goodman. But Farrington then caught his own high kick and sped through for a superb score, leaving Sam Howes' late ON try irrelevant.

Holden brace sets up Stourbridge victory

Anton Rickards scored direct from a



Yellow peril in first defeat for Hales

They continued to attack but were caught on the counter for 2-0.

Graham Knight brought the home side to within a goal but although Old Sils were reduced to nine men the equaliser would not come and

men following yellow for Mike Wattley and Jake Brooke but held

Old Halesonians 1 Bromsgrove 2
Old Halesonians Ladies were two down at half-time. They did take a consolation goal following a goal-mouth scramble.

STOUR GO NAP IN CUP CLASH

Late goals decisive

Drew Canavan struck for the visitors just before the first period of extra time drew to a close and a brace from John Griffin – the second a bizarre goal, defender Rory McFarlane slicing the ball against his own crossbar before it rebounded in off the Stourbridge man – settled the tie.

Stourbridge were rewarded for their efforts after 25 minutes when a throw-in from McCone on the right was headed on by Leon Broadhurst for an unmarked Rowe to guide a close-range header beyond Vaughan.

Lofted

Drake chested down a lofted through ball and dribbled across the edge of the Evesham box before float-

Lofted

pulled a short left-wing corner back to Dyson on the edge of the penalty area and his shot took a deflection past the stand-in keeper.

Neal takes hat-trick of touring car titles



Matt Neal celebrates his Touring Car title. *Picture: Darren Price*

"It's going to take some sinking in," he said. "I'm overwhelmed - I never thought I'd win it once in my life and now it's three. It means the world to me."

"He's fast, he's hungry and he is one of the best there is. Perhaps I can help him on his way next year."

Technical

"But to hold this trophy at the end of it all is a real bonus."

Kicking fly-half shows his class

Jersey's only try came midway through the half, scrum-half David McCormack tapping a penalty as the Saxons gathered their thoughts and weaving his way 40 metres to the line, Le Bourgeois slotting over a simple conversion.

Muscle

believes he has the manpower to put a string of results together.

The Stourbridge Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Wolverhampton on Thursday, October 20, 2011.

NEW

Gourmet Range

The image shows the Domino's Pizza logo on the left, which consists of a red diamond with two white circles and a blue banner with the text "Domino's Pizza". To the right, there is a photograph of a pizza from the "Gourmet Range" with various toppings, served on a white plate. Above the pizza, the word "Gourmet" is written in a large, elegant script, and "Range" is written in a smaller, simpler font below it. The word "NEW" is written in bold, white, sans-serif capital letters above the logo.

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